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ABSTRACT

Programs funded through the federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act sex equity set aside are required to provide occupational education in high wage, high skill, and nontraditional careers. This bulletin, one of a series reporting on Perkins Act funding in New Jersey, reports on the effectiveness of displaced homemaker and sex equity programs in changing the sex role stereotyping of participants. Sex role stereotyping is one factor that has contributed to the economic disparity between the genders. Pretest and posttest data were collected from 224 participants, largely female, in displaced homemaker and sex equity programs using the MacDonald Sex Role Inventory. Participants showed some changes in sex role attitudes, with mean posttest scores on the inventory significantly higher than mean pretest scores. Scores for younger participants also reflected more equitable attitudes than did scores for older participants. When scores on the inventory's four dimensions were analyzed in a subset of 73 respondents, changes also reflected more equitable attitudes following program participation. Since projects operating with Perkins Act sex equity set aside funds have increased scores on the Sex Role Survey indicating changes toward equitable attitudes, these programs should be continued and expanded. (Contains 2 figures and 15 refrences.) (SLD)

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SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING: CHANGES BY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

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RESEARCH BULLETIN

NEW JERSEY
CAREER EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

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SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING: CHANGES BY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

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The office of Bilingual Education and Equity Issues, New Jersey Department of Education, through funding from the Carl D. Perkins Act sponsors single parent/displaced homemaker and sex equity programs throughout the state. As one component of an on going evaluation, program participants take a series of pre and post tests. The results are analyzed independently by the Career Equity Assistance Center for Research and Evaluation at Montclair State University (CEAC). This bulletin represents one in a series of four reports on test results obtained during Program Year 1995. Other bulletins present results of testing for self esteem, equity standards and knowledge of nontraditional careers.

PARTICIPANTS' ATTITUDES BECOME MORE EQUITABLE

Programs funded by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, P.L.101-392, sex equity set aside provide occupational education and services that address issues related to gender bias. Sex role stereotyping is one factor that has contributed to the economic disparity between the genders.

Programs offered through the Perkins Act sex equity set aside in New Jersey are consistent with the *Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of Education in New Jersey*. One of the most relevant relationships between the Strategic Plan and the Perkins Act programs pertains to identifying corrective actions to address educational inequities resulting from gender bias and discrimination.

This bulletin reports the effectiveness of displaced homemaker and sex equity programs funded by the Perkins Act in changing the sex role stereotyping of participants. In New Jersey these programs are administered by the Office of Bilingual Education and Equity Issues of the New Jersey Department of Education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social stereotypes are characterized as beliefs and expectancies that are attributed to a group of humans (Ashmore and DelBoca, 1981; Hamilton and Trolier, 1986). Gender stereotypes include classifications of masculine and feminine characteristics (Eagly and Steffen, 1984; Harris, 1994) and identification of gender subtypes (Ashmore, et al, 1986; Six and Eckes, 1991). Recent research (Fagot, et al, 1992) reported that knowledge of gender labels and gender stereotypes begins at a young age and was present in toddlers.

Females generally have more equitable sex role attitudes than males (King and King, 1990; Bernstein, Coté-Bonanno and Reilly, 1992;

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Tuck, Rolfe and Adair, 1994). Gender stereotyping is also affected by ethnicity (Harris, 1994). African-American subjects considered more traits common to both sexes. Anglo-American subjects rated more items desirable for one sex or the other than did Hispanic-Americans. More equitable attitudes have been found among older persons except on the Behavior dimension of the Sex Roles Survey (Bernstein, et. al, 1992; Bernstein, et. al, 1995).

The effects of programs designed to change attitudes concerning sex role stereotyping have been studied recently (Bernstein, et al., 1992; Manning, 1993; Matteson, 1991). During Program Year 1994, sex role attitudes of participants in New Jersey programs funded through the Perkins sex equity set aside changed to reflect more equitable attitudes (Bernstein, Coté-Bonanno, Reilly, Carver and Doremus, 1995). Changes were significant on two dimensions of sex role equity: equality in professions (Work) and sex appropriate behavior such as customs and manners (Behavior).

Programs in operation for more than one year have been shown to have participants with more positive attitudes than programs in operation for shorter periods of time (Bernstein, et al., 1992).

METHOD OF STUDY

Data was collected from participants enrolled in displaced homemaker and sex equity programs throughout New Jersey during Program Year 1995. The MacDonald's Sex Role Survey (MacDonald, 1976) was modified for use to determine attitudes concerning overall sex roles and also on four dimensions of sex role equity: equality in professions (Work); sex appropriate behavior such as customs and manners (Behavior); social-domestic work (Equity); and power in the home (Home). The scale allows respondents to indicate their attitudes on a seven point scale ranging from "agree very much" to "disagree very much."

A total test score was calculated for pre and post tests based on 224 subjects. In addition, pre and post test scores for each of the four dimensions of sex role attitude measured by the Sex Role Survey were collected for a group of 73 of the 224 subjects.

Pre tests were completed prior to the beginning of the program. Post tests were completed six week after completion of that program segment most likely to affect sex role stereotyping. Completed tests were scored by program personnel and the results forwarded for analysis to the Career Equity Assistance Center for Research and Evaluation at Montclair State University.

TOTAL SEX ROLE SURVEY

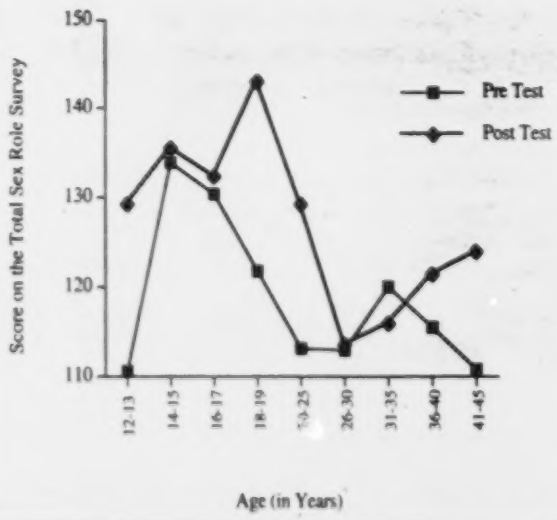
The majority of the 224 participants who completed the total sex role survey, 79%, were females. They ranged in age from 12 to 47 years. The largest portion of the respondents (31%) were between 31 and 40 years of age. Participants who classified themselves as Black represented the largest ethnic/racial group (42%). Other respondents were Caucasian (30%), Asians including Pacific Islanders and Hispanic (4.4%).

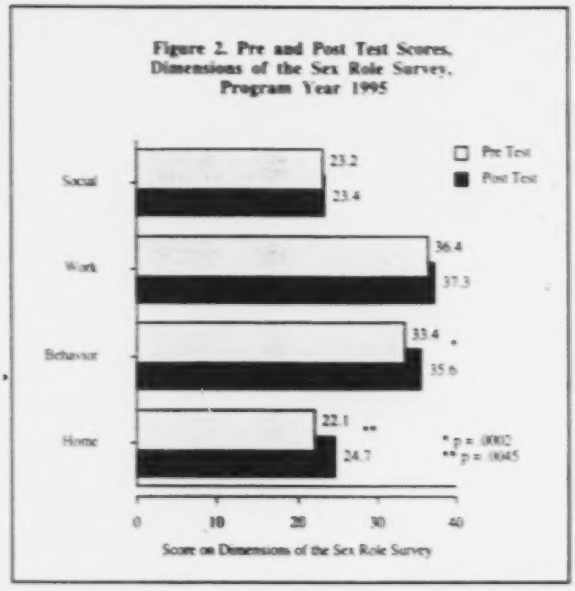
The mean post test score for all participants on the Sex Role Survey (M127.8) was significantly higher than the mean pre test score (M121.5). This change reflects a shift toward more equitable attitudes as a result of participation in a displaced homemaker or sex equity program.

Mean post test scores were also higher than pre test scores for most age categories and ethnic groups analyzed. Not all differences were significant.

Mean post test scores were significantly higher for participants who

Figure 1. Pre and Post Test Scores, for All Participants and by Age, Program Year 1995





were in the 12-13 year, 18-19 year and 20-25 year age range. The highest mean post test score was for those participants in the 18-19 year age range (M143.0) and the lowest mean post test score was for those in the 26-30 year age range (M113.6). All mean post test scores for those in the 12-25 year age ranges were higher than mean post test scores for those in the 26-45 year age range (see Figure 1).

The mean post test score (M137.6) for Asians was significantly higher than their pre test score (M124.7) indicating a shift toward a more equitable attitude. Mean post test scores were also higher than mean pre test scores for Blacks, Caucasians and Hispanics but these changes were not significant.

DIMENSIONS ON THE SEX ROLE SURVEY

Scores on the four dimensions of the Sex Role Survey were analyzed for 73 of the total 224 participants who completed the total survey. These 73 participants were all female. Only about one fourth of these participants, 23%, were under the age of 20 years. The largest age categories represented were 36-40 years (19%), 31-35 years (16%) and 41-45 years (14%).

Participants who classified themselves as Caucasian represented the largest ethnic group, 39.3%, followed by Black participants (29%), Asians including Pacific Islanders (19%) and Hispanic participants (7.9%).

The change between mean pre and post test scores on each of the four dimensions, Home, Behavior, Work and Social, reflected a change toward a more equitable attitude following participation in a displaced homemaker or sex equity program (see Figure 2). The changes in score on the Home Dimension and on the Behavior Dimension were significant.

Home Dimension

The mean post test score (M24.7) on the Home Dimensions of the Sex Role Survey was significantly higher than the mean pre test score (M22.1) for all participants combined. Asian participants had a significantly higher mean post test score (M31.4) than mean pre test score (M23.5) on the Home Dimension of the Sex Role Survey. Changes between the pre and post test scores were not significant for other ethnic groups.

Behavior Dimension

The mean post test score (M35.6) on the Behavior Dimension of the Sex Role Survey was significantly higher than the mean pre test score (M33.4) for all participants. The mean post test score (M41.6) for Asians was significantly higher than their mean pre test score (M35.5) on the Behavior Dimension. None of the changes for other ethnic groups was significant.

Work Dimension

The mean post test score was higher than the mean pre test score on the Work Dimension for all participants combined and for Asians, Caucasians, Hispanics and Others. The only significant increase in the mean score was for the Asians. Mean post test score for Black participants (M31.5) was significantly lower than the mean pre test score (M32.5).

Social Dimension

The mean post test score (M23.4) for the participants on the Social Dimension was slightly higher than the mean pre test score (M23.2), but this change was not significant. The mean post test score (M33.1) for Asians was significantly higher than the mean pre test score (M27.4). Other ethnic categories had lower post test scores on the Social Dimension, but only the decrease for the Black participants was significant

DISCUSSION

Participants in the displaced homemaker and sex equity programs showed some changes in sex role at-

titude. Mean post test scores on the Sex Role Survey were significantly higher than mean pre test scores. Scores for younger participants reflected more equitable attitudes than scores for older participants. In previous program years, more equitable attitudes were found among older participants (Bernstein, et al., 1992; Bernstein, et al., 1995).

As with participants from Program Year 1994 (Bernstein, et al., 1995), the scores of the participants on the Behavior dimension of the Sex Role Survey reflected changes toward a more equitable attitude. In contrast, in the current study, scores on the Home Dimension reflected changes toward a more equitable attitude as did changes in the Behavior and the Dimension, although these latter changes were not significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since programs operating with Perkins Act sex equity set aside funds have increased scores on the Sex Role Survey indicating changes toward equitable attitudes, these programs should be continued and expanded. The wide range of opportunities and services offered by these programs include:

- ✔ ASETS (Achieving Sex Equity Through Students) workshops,
- ✔ Saturday workshops that focus on nontraditional careers,
- ✔ role model panels and
- ✔ life skills programs, such as New Beginnings.

At a time when New Jersey's educational system is emphasizing the importance of gender equity by the inclusion of the concept in the *Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of Education in New Jersey*, the continuation and expansion of the sex equity set aside programs is of particular importance.

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